Persiflage and Persuasion

By EPES W. SARGENT

"It's horribly improper to sit out three dances with the same man," remarked Miss Millington, though she did not offer to abandon her comfortable position in the cozy corner.

"A most proper and delightful impropriety," declared Tanner, "providing, of course, that I am the one man."

"They will be saying that we are engaged," hinted Miss Millington.

"Heaven forfend that they speak not the truth!" he answered, keeping his eyes fixed upon the vista of the ballroom showing through the arched doorway.

"But we are not!"

"It's not my fault," he said humbly.

"I should say not," she retorted sarcastically. "To propose three times in one evening!"

"Four," corrected Tanner comfortably. "I think I just proposed again."

"I don't remember," she protested.

"Maybe not!" he agreed. "I've got so in the habit of that I guess I am growing stale. I thought I said

"DICK!" SHE CALLED SOFTLY.

something about hoping that they spoke the truth when they said we were engaged."

"Oh, that!" she said, with infinite scorn.

"I can't give you one out of 'The Lover's Handy Manual' every time," he apologized. "I'm saving those up for grand occasions."

"'Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh,'" she quoted lightly.

"Not always," he urged. "Sometimes I can't say a word."

"And other times I wish you could not," she finished cruelly.

"How would you like California for a honeymoon?" he asked irrelevantly.

"It would all depend," she laughed. "I think I prefer Europe. I detest trains."

"So do I," he answered, with a relapse into lightness, "in a ballroom. Stepped on Mrs. Bascom's, and she looked at me as though I was a train robber and not merely a wrecker."

"Is one worse than the other?" she demanded.

"I don't know," he admitted. "I had to say something."

"Yes?" she asked, with a rising inflection that conveyed a negative.

"You see," he argued to save his ground, "if you're wrecked you may lose your life, but you won't mind it. If you are robbed you lose your money, and you do."

"Is money more important than life?" she exclaimed.

"Some people appear to think so," he said pointedly.

She laid a gloved hand upon his arm.

"See here, Dick," she said pleadingly, "don't think I am going to accept Clarence Stone for his money."

"Are you marrying him because you love him?" he asked, turning that he might look straight into her eyes.

She tried to meet his glance, but her lashes fell.

"You don't understand," she said pleadingly. "You see"—

"That's the trouble," he broke in impetuously. "I see all too well. You are going to marry him because you feel that you have to, because you are afraid to face your mother and tell her that you will not marry merely for money."

"You put it so crudely," she complained.

"Does it gild the pill," he said bitterly, "to pretend that you owe it to your mother to accept this most advantageous match she has made for you?"

"We owe a duty to our parents," she insisted.

"But not when duty means a lifetime of regret."

"Clarence is very kind," she said falteringly. "Mother says that in time"—

"You will come to love him dearly," he finished for her. "It's the old argument, trotted out every time a girl is laid a sacrifice upon the altar of Mammon. Do you think you will ever learn to love him?"

"You are very cruel," she said, with a little break in her voice.

He inquired harshly. "And what may be said of you?" he demanded. "We have been sweethearts since we were children. I have a fair income and a name that has never been tarnished. Our tastes are congenial, our opinions are the same, we love each other, yet because a good natured, foolish newly arrived wishes you for his house and is willing to pay for you just as he paid for that Whistler he bought last summer—and he will appreciate you just about as much as he can the painting—you must marry him."

"Mother is not rich," she said falteringly.

"She has an income of $10,000 a year," he declared. "If she would, she could live within that income in entire comfort."

"But until papa died"— she said softly.

"Until your father died," he persisted, "she spent every cent he could earn. That's why she has no more now."

"Mother can't help"— she began.

"I don't ask her to," he broke in, willfully misunderstanding her. "I leave tomorrow for California to take over the Santa Mana vineyard. It's going to be hard sledding at the start, but I can keep a wife in comfort, and I hoped that you would come with me."

"You are going west tomorrow?" she cried, startled out of her pose.

"And alone," he said simply. "I had hoped for your love and sympathy. At any rate, I could stand the uncertainty here no longer. All my money is tied up in the vineyards now, and I can't afford to come back east and hang around."

"Did you suppose I could leave so soon?" she asked.

"You won't need more than you have to go out there," he explained. "You could pack up in the morning, be married in the afternoon and leave in the evening."

"Of all the ridiculous things!" she exclaimed.

"It isn't ridiculous," he said soberly. "I can't stand this sort of thing any longer."

Without warning he clasped her close. For a moment she felt the pressure of his lips against hers, the tightening of his powerful arms, then without a word he rose and walked quickly toward the door that she might not see how he was suffering.

"Dick," she called softly, but not so low that his quick ears did not catch the words. He turned and came toward her. Every instant he remained was exquisite torture, and he chafed at the delay, yet even now her slightest word was a command. "Dick," she said softly as he bent his head, "I don't think a trip to California would make a bad honeymoon."

She was smiling at him as she had smiled in the early evening, but now there was a new light of tenderness in her eyes. His face glowed with hope.

"There's luck in odd numbers," he cried. "I've already proposed four times. For a fifth time, will you marry me, sweetheart?"

He bent his head so low to catch her answer that her lips brushed his cheek as she whispered, "Yes."

Cardinal Newman's Gentleman.

In telling what he thought a gentleman should be Cardinal Newman once wrote: "He has his eyes on all his company. He is tender toward the bashful, gentle toward the distant and merciful toward the absurd. In his conversation the gentleman will remember to whom he is speaking, have thought for all the company and avoid allusions that would give pain to any of them, steering away also from topics that irritate. When he does a favor to another (and he does many) the gentleman will somehow make it appear that he is receiving the benefit instead of conferring it. He is never mean or little in his disputes. Moreover, he shows that he has an intellect far above the average in the fact that he never mistakes personalities and sharp sayings for arguments. Most of mankind do. When grief, illness or losses come to him he submits to pain because it is inevitable. Bereavement he takes with heroic philosophy because it is irreparable. He goes to death without a murmur because it is destiny."

The Power of Prejudice.

The wife of a New Zealand missionary once had an interview with a native matron, who confessed that she would die with shame at the idea of permitting her boy to "run about with an undressed face"—i. e., with cheeks free from tattoo marks. The attempt to save native youngsters from the martyrdom of the absurd custom caused repeated riots and disagreeable scenes with the indignant relatives, and with a similar emphasis the eastern Hindoos protest against the abolishment of infant marriages.

In Calcutta alone the indignation meeting of the priests was attended by 185,000 natives, including hundreds of rajahs, merchant princes and scholars, besides tradesmen and peasants. The women of Bengal observed a general fast on the "day of protest;" shrieks and howls filled the air. The population of several cities seemed to have gone crazy en masse. One fanatic offered to sacrifice his life to propitiate the wrath of heaven.

Eagles and Chamois Fight.

A desperate combat between two eagles and a chamois was witnessed on a snow covered mountain near Flushi.

One of the eagles attacked a young chamois, when it was charged by the sire of the herd, which was some distance away. At this point another eagle appeared, but the chamois repeatedly beat them both off by fierce thrusts of its antlers.

The struggle continued for half an hour, after which the birds took to flight. The chamois remained immova-

ble, with head erect, gazing defiantly at the soaring birds until they were lost to sight.

Some sportsmen next day found the spot where the heroic combat had taken place littered with feathers and fur, and the snow was splashed with blood. —Geneva Cor. London Express.